



CITY COUNCIL

Public Safety, Public Works and Neighborhood Services Committee

***Monday, May 21, 2012
Meeting Report***

Committee Members Attending: S. Marmarou, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz Chair

Others Attending: S. Katzenmoyer, D. Klahr

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz, Chair, called the Public Safety, Public Works and Neighborhood Services Committee meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

Recreation Commission Fees

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz explained that this topic will be discussed at this evening's work session to allow discussion by all Councilors.

Ms. Klahr explained that after speaking with this committee at their last meeting, she scheduled a meeting with Mr. Kersley and Ms. Butler regarding the fees for use of the bandshell. She stated that when she arrived to meet with Mr. Kersley, Mr. Lloyd was present instead. She stated that she explained that recreation revenue was removed from the City's budget as it was to be kept by the Recreation Commission to grow programming. She stated that Mr. Lloyd felt that the revenue was included in another City revenue budget area and the only recreation line item changing was the \$488,000 annual contribution as that is all that is included in the agreement. Ms. Klahr stated that Mr. Lloyd did not seem to care about past discussions and was keeping recreation revenue for the City rather than for the Commission.

Ms. Klahr stated that Ms. Landes, who assisted the City through the formation of the Commission, provided copies of meeting summaries showing the intent of the City to turn recreation revenue over to the Commission.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz explained that Ms. Klahr requested a meeting with the executive committee of the Recreation Commission on Friday but that she suggested the topic be discussed this evening. She noted the need to amend the agreement to clarify this issue.

Chief Heim arrived at this time.

2012 JAG Grant

Chief Heim explained that the City receives funds annually through this Department of Justice grant program. He stated that the program began in the mid 1990's and uses a formula to determine the amount received. He explained that the County receives a portion of the grant funding as they provide prosecution and jail facilities. He stated that the amount of the grant has been reduced and is used primarily to pay overtime costs for special details. He stated that the grant receipts must be spent within two years.

Mr. Marmarou questioned the formula used to calculate the amount received. Chief Heim stated that it is based on part one crime figures.

Mr. Lloyd arrived at this time.

Mr. Marmarou requested an update on this afternoon's bank robbery. Chief Heim stated that he was in meetings all day and did not have any information.

Mr. Acosta arrived at this time.

Mr. Marmarou questioned the police presence at the demonstration at the Performing Arts Center. Mr. Lloyd stated that the demonstrators were informed that they could not be in the streets blocking traffic. Chief Heim stated that there are officers on site.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz explained the agenda changes. She stated that the Police Manning Levels and Crime Trends and the Recreation Commission Revenue topics would be discussed with the full body of Council later this evening. She noted the need to amend the Recreation Commission Agreement to clarify the revenue issue. She stated that Mr. Spencer was involved in these discussions and should remember that revenue would be kept by the Commission to grow programming.

Mr. Lloyd left the meeting at this time.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned the progress with the investigation into the shooting at S 17th & Haak Sts. Chief Heim stated that warrants have been issued but the suspects can not be located.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned the enforcement of the use of fireworks. Chief Heim stated that this item is very hard to control.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted her concern that the spring has been very dry and there have already been several forest fires in the area. Chief Heim stated that the State seems to have relaxed their regulations and people are using more.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she will be speaking with Representative Caltagirone.

Chief Heim stated that police will respond if called but that it's a difficult item to patrol.

Ms. Hoag arrived at this time.

Ms. Klahr stated that the Rodeway Inn was given 30 days to clean the debris dumped at Northmont Playground. She stated that the owner claimed to have an agreement with the City to dump clean fill at this location and that porcelain is considered clean fill. She stated that Muhlenberg Township will follow up on this issue and the many other issues discovered during their inspection.

Ms. Klahr thanked Chief Heim for the work done at Baer Park. She stated that there is a vendor who parks in the park each weekend selling alcohol. Chief Heim stated that tickets were issued for parking on the park property. Mr. Acosta explained that alcohol is sold in colored plastic cups. Mr. Marmarou suggested that the PA Liquor Control Board also be informed of this operation.

Ms. Klahr stated that there is a large group using the hockey rink for volleyball.

Mr. Acosta described the use of the handball court.

Review of Floodplain Ordinance Amendment

Ms. Hoag stated that FEMA has moved to a digital mapping system and the amendment is required. She stated that FEMA wants to ensure that municipalities have updated their floodplain regulations. She stated that there are some new properties affected, some properties that are no longer affected, and others whose properties have different portions affected.

Mr. Marmarou questioned how people will know about the changes. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that the amendment has been advertised and that flyers were sent to the affected property owners informing them of the public hearing.

Ms. Hoag stated that the amendment was introduced at Council's May 14 meeting. The public hearing will be held on June 4 and the amendment is eligible for enactment on June 11. She stated that the amendment must be effective before July 3.

Mr. Jones arrived at this time.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if maps would be available to view at the hearing. Ms. Hoag stated that they would be available. She stated that the maps are now on the City's website for public review.

Update on Identifying Municipalities to Purchase City Fleet Maintenance Services (PW 03)

Mr. Jones stated that there is no update on this issue. He stated that he is working with Mr. Murin on this project. He stated that there was mild interest in his correspondence from the fall of 2011 but no commitment. He stated that other municipalities will be contacted.

Recreation Commission and Rental Fees

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz again explained that this topic would be discussed at this evening's work session. She noted the need for the Recreation Commission to track the amount of maintenance work performed by Public Works employees for future reference and issues.

Ms. Klahr stated that the Commission has hired one employee to supplement Public Works by mowing baseball fields.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need to continue reviewing lease agreements. She stated that she has requested a meeting with the City Solicitor regarding breaking the agreement for the Egelman's baseball field.

Mr. Jones stated that the City was informed that the East Ends Club's boiler system has failed its inspection. He stated that the City will be cited if the repairs are not made. He stated that the City has not received payment since the lease agreement was renegotiated. He suggested that they be removed from the building but noted that a new use should be found to prevent vandalism of the site.

Ms. Klahr suggested allowing Little Acts of Love to use this facility for storage. Ms. Hoag stated that this would not be a suitable location. Mr. Jones noted the need for people to be present in the building.

Egelman's Park/Dam

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she attended the Gravity Trail dedication and that a pavilion has sustained damage from a fallen tree. She noted that there are people interested in repairing the roof and questioned if this was a historic structure.

Mr. Jones suggested that Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz check with the Historical Preservation Specialist. He also noted the need to ensure the repairs are made properly.

Mr. Marmarou noted the condition of the pavilion at Hampden Park.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that Home Depot is interested in making repairs to the pavilions in Mineral Spring Park. Mr. Jones noted the need for anyone working in City parks to work with himself or Kyle Zeiber.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the mud catcher is empty. Ms. Hoag stated that the fall storms prevented the Izaak Walton League from harvesting but that they would be doing so in

the spring. She stated that this is why the mud catcher is empty.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if Lower Alsace was still interested in taking ownership of this park. Mr. Jones stated that he is unsure as there has not been recent communication.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the City can no longer care for all its parks. Mr. Jones noted residents' expectation that parks be well manicured but that some areas should be allowed to meadow. Ms. Hoag explained that this also assists with reducing the goose population.

Mr. Jones explained that slopes should not be manicured as the growth assists with keeping the banks intact.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need to better publicize the City's plans for parks regarding meadows, etc.

Yard Waste Collection/Drop Off Site

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned what is collected. Mr. Jones stated that grass is not collected.

Ms. Katzenmoyer questioned why grass is not taken but weeds are. Ms. Hoag stated that many chemicals are put on grass by homeowners that are not put on weeds. She stated that this chemical imbalance causes problems.

Mr. Jones stated that personal composting is also an option. He stated that the City does not have an appropriate drop off location. He stated that the woodshed does not have public access and would cause traffic issues. He stated that there would also need to be staff onsite. He stated that weekend hours would require overtime. If the site is not manned, residents will dump.

Ms. Hoag stated that people will not follow directions.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need for better public education.

Ms. Klahr questioned how new homeowners learn this information. Mr. Jones stated that he covers the topic on this BCTV program, flyers are sent to residences, and it is included in the Welcome to Reading guidebook.

Repaving of Cotton St

Mr. Jones stated that the request for bids will be sent out as soon as the documents are approved by PennDOT. He noted his hope that construction would begin in mid-August.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need for a public meeting before the project begins. Mr. Jones suggested holding this meeting in mid-July.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted that UGI is making street cuts all over the City. Mr. Jones stated that they are responsible for repairing the streets.

Former Caum Home Site

Mr. Marmarou stated that this site may undergo subdivision. He questioned if PennDOT would need to approve curb cuts for driveways. Mr. Jones expressed the belief that all of Hampden Blvd is a State road. He stated that permits would be needed.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if this would be problematic. Mr. Jones stated that the developer should apply for the permits.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted by
Shelly Katzenmoyer, Deputy City Clerk